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# Exercises in reacting to sensory imagery and words carrying emotional overtones

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EXERCISES IN REACTING TO  
SENSORY IMAGERY AND WORDS CARRYING EMOTIONAL OVERTONES

presented to:  
Miss Helen M. E. Woodward  
in fulfillment of requirements of  
Speech and Hearing 560

by Robin P. Henne  
May 1970

**For Reference**

Not to be taken from this room

## INTRODUCTION

A vital source of information about our world, for everyone but especially for the deaf, is the written word. How else could we know about so many things that we've never seen, except that we read about and visualize them. This visualization is crucial to reading comprehension. The individual must be able to form and react to sensory images from what he reads, or his comprehension of that reading will be limited, as will his experience with the world in which he lives. Obviously our capacities and opportunities for actual personal experience are relatively small. At some point we must be able to utilize vicarious experience - to form the necessary sensory images in such a way as to make them real to us.

Reading is probably the single most important source of information for the deaf. But because of the language impairment stemming from the hearing impairment, deaf children in general are well below average in reading ability. It is our job as teachers to see that they are taught the skills necessary to make reading both profitable and enjoyable. In addition to the ability to interpret the structures of the language, these include word attack skills such as recognizing and interpreting prefixes, suffixes, and root words, synonyms and antonyms, deducing the meaning of an unknown word through contextual clues, forming and reacting to sensory imagery, and reacting to words carrying emotional overtones.

It is with the two latter skills, sensory imagery and emotional color, that this paper is concerned. As stated previously, any individual who cannot conjure up and respond to mental images misses a large part of what he reads. The basic foundations for forming sensory images should be laid from the very earliest years of the child's school experience. In Preprimary, when children are learning to handle

descriptive language, sensory imagery is involved. As the teacher says "I am thinking of an animal that lives in the zoo. He has four legs and a very long neck. He is very tall." the children must be formulating and refining a mental picture that corresponds to the teacher's description. Young children can be taught to create mental pictures from first-hand experience and from simple stories. This is done at the Primary level under the name of arithmetic, to teach the children to visualize number situations, stories, and actions. It also helps build general sensory imagery. Art activities also have a place. After a trip or experience, children can be asked to draw what they saw or what they liked best. To do so, they must have retained some kind of mental image. Later, a short story or poem can be told to the children, having them draw what it makes them see.

There are, of course, many other activities done at the lower school levels, perhaps for other specified purposes, that involve the children's use of some kind of sensory imagery. As the children advance into the intermediate and upper school levels, more specific work should be given on this and all of the reading skills. Our ultimate goal is not to teach the children all the information they will ever need to know, but to teach the skills that make them independent learners, so that they can learn the information on their own as it is needed.

There are many aspects of forming and reacting to sensory imagery, including 1) more colorful means of saying overworked words and expressions, 2) interpreting words and phrases conveying mood, 3) making appropriate and colorful associations between a verb and its doer, 4) interpreting the mood associated with an utterance, 5) interpreting ideas implied by word pictures, 6) comparing and contrasting images created by words, and many others. The following exercises are samples of what can be done with these various aspects. As it is difficult and rather pointless to attempt to work on any one skill independently of the others, much overlap will

found with other reading skills, particularly deriving meaning from contextual clues. No attempt has been made to specify at what levels these exercises should be given. Because the language and capabilities of a class at any given level can vary so much from year to year, it was felt that the individual teacher could best judge what was suitable for her class, and either use the appropriate exercises as written or as a springboard for developing material of her own.

Association between verb and doer

One of the features that makes verbal language, written or oral, vivid is an appropriate association between a verb and its doer. For example, one could very well say "The horse walked into the barn", but how much more colorful and appropriate to "horseness" to say that he "clomped". The first is perfectly correct, but the second conveys a much more vivid mental image. The difference is very subtle, and deaf children need much practice in saying things in other, more interesting ways. As with anything else taught, some children will seem to pick this up naturally. Others, however, may need to have it pointed out to them and to have guided practice in its use. In the following exercise, the task is to choose which of a group of verbs is most appropriate to the doer.

Choose the verb that you think fits best in each sentence.

1. The old man \_\_\_\_\_ across the street.

hopped                      skipped                      hobbled

2. The glass \_\_\_\_\_ when it fell on the floor.

shattered                      popped                      rolled

3. The hungry baby \_\_\_\_\_.

cooed                      wailed                      smiled

4. The angry girl \_\_\_\_\_ her foot.

tapped                      patted                      stamped

5. The horse \_\_\_\_\_ into the barn.

walked                      tripped                      clomped

6. The baby \_\_\_\_\_ across the room.

crawled                      ran                      hopped

7. The fuzzy puppy \_\_\_\_\_ across the yard.

hopped                      scampered                      fell

8. The huge eagle \_\_\_\_\_ over the treetops.

flapped                      soared                      tumbled

Identifying the mood intended by the author

In order to understand a reading selection, the reader must be able to identify with the characters to some degree - to realize what they are feeling and to react to it. Otherwise, reading would be a very dull pastime indeed. Very few authors state outright what their characters are feeling. Instead, they describe the world through the character's perceptions, for the reader to experience vicariously. Perhaps because it isn't directly related to their own experience, this is often very difficult for deaf children. In the following exercise, they must imagine themselves to be in a number of given situations and decide which situations might create a particular mood.



Use your imagination when you read these phrases. How do they make you feel?

Which of the following phrases might make you feel frightened?  
Put a check beside them.

1. the eerie creaking of an old door when you are alone at night
2. something soft and moist crawling up your arm
3. a soft furry puppy curled up in your lap

Which of the following phrases might make you think of brightness?

1. glittering Christmas tree ornaments
2. a cold cloudy day
3. sun shining on an icy sidewalk

Which of the following might make you feel hungry?

1. the smell of warm cookies
2. the smell of burning toast
3. the smell of burning leaves

Which of the following might make you feel happy?

1. a bright, sunny, clear day
2. a damp, dismal day
3. a brand new puppy

Interpreting implied ideas

This heading could very well cover exercises given under other headings as well. Indeed, one of the most important reading skills is the ability to ferret out ideas that are not directly stated, whether they involve the setting, the characters functions or relations to each other, etc. In the following exercise neither the characters nor the settings are specifically stated. From the context and action of the stories the reader must envision the situation and decide the setting and, in some cases, who the characters are.

Read these stories and answer the questions on another paper.

1. Mary sat on a rock and watched a bird. Squirrels played in the trees. The weather was warm, but there was still a little snow on the ground.

- a) Where was Mary?
- b) What time of year was it?

2. Tom was sitting at his desk. He looked out the window and saw some children on the playground. Mrs. Black told him to pay attention.

- a) Where was Tom?
- b) Who was Mrs. Black?

3. Patty watched the other children splashing and playing. then she put on a cap to keep her hair dry, and jumped off the diving board.

Where was Patty?

4. Sally was sitting in a big chair. Mr. Evans put a towel around her neck. First he cut her hair, then he curled it.

- a) Where was Sally?
- b) Who was Mr. Evans?

5. The lady behind the desk gave Jim his ticket. "Your flight is number 693," She said. "It leaves Gate 4 at 2:17."

Where was Jim?

6. Mark wandered up and down the aisles between shelves full of books. Lots of pictures were hanging on the walls.

Severa; people left the building with books under their arms.

Where was Mark?

Mood associated with a situation

To appropriately associate a mood with a situation, the reader must be able to project himself into that situation - to visualize it, experience it vicariously, and analyze his reaction to it. To a practiced and fluent reader this is almost second nature, done without consciously thinking about it. The less fluent reader, however, may have never realized the necessity for this mental process, and consequently misses much of the pleasure of reading. The following exercise asks the children to pretend that they are the people involved in each situation, and to decide how they would feel. The problem is made somewhat easier by offering a choice of possible answers.

Read the following stories and think about how you would feel if they happened to you.

1. Martha was waiting to make a speech to the P.T.A. She had never talked to a large group before.

How do you think Martha felt?

nervous

funny

silly

2. Tom's family planned to go camping for a week. The day they planned to leave, Tom got the mumps.

How do you think Tom felt?

sorry

angry

disappointed

3. Mary found a dress that she really liked at Famous Barr. She tapped the lady in front of her and said "Mom, look at this." But when the lady turned around, she was not Mary's mother.

How do you think Mary felt?

funny

embarrassed

scared

4. One night Cathy's mother and father went out and left her home by herself. She sat down in the living room and read a book. All of a sudden she heard a funny noise.

How do you think Cathy felt?

tired

hungry

scared

5. Sue baked a birthday cake for her father. She worked all afternoon decorating it and making it beautiful. When Father tasted it, he said "That's the best cake I ever tasted!"

How do you think Sue felt?

proud

happy

hungry

More colorful ways of expression

Everyone is probably guilty of overworking certain words - words that have become trite from overuse. Most deaf children particularly tend toward these stereotyped expressions that we call "deafisms", almost as if afraid to try any method of expression that isn't old and very familiar. The verb "say", for example, is much used and certainly correct, but how much more information we get from "whisper", "beg", etc. The conversation of deaf children would lose a great deal of its "deafness" if they were to use more colorful ways of expressing themselves. In the following exercises, they are asked to think of more interesting ways to say the sentences, given a number of possible choices.

Can you think of more interesting ways to say "said"?  
Look at the words at the bottom of the page, and use them to  
rewrite these sentences.

1. Mother said, "Sh. We must be very quiet."
2. "Give me back my doll!" said the little girl.
3. The angry man said, "Get off my lawn."
4. "Please, may I go with you?" said Mary.
5. The little boy was afraid of the dog. He said, "Mother!  
Help me!"
6. Tommy fell and sprained his arm. "Mom, it hurts."  
he said.

to whimper  
to scream  
to whisper  
to ask  
to shout  
to cry  
to yell  
to beg

Rewrite these sentences so that the verbs are more interesting.  
You may look at the words at the bottom of the page.

1. The truck went over the bridge.
2. The children went across the street to the park.
3. The tired old horse went down the street.
4. The lost puppy went through the park.
6. The children went across the park as fast as they could.

to scamper

to run

to rumble

to race

to plod

to wander

to stumble



Comparing and contrasting

As stated earlier, a reader must be able to project himself into the situations about which he is reading. With practice he can learn to summon up images so vivid that even small details are clear. In the following exercise, the task requires two different mental images, and the children must decide to which picture the given details belong.

Can you make pictures in your mind? Pretend that you are in school, First pretend that it is Tuesday morning. Then pretend that it is late Tuesday night.

Put 1 beside the sentences that tell about school in the morning. Put 2 beside the sentences that tell about school at night.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Class 4 is watching a movie in the library.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Miss Woodward's door is closed and locked.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Moonlight is shining through all of the windows.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Mrs. Franke is typing a letter.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Some children are playing on the playground.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The office is empty.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Dr. Lane is talking to some visitors.
- \_\_\_\_\_ There are no lights on in any of the classrooms.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The building is quiet. You can't hear a sound anywhere.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Several children are putting their coats in their lockers.
- \_\_\_\_\_ All of the desks in the Rotating Department are bare.
- \_\_\_\_\_ There are no books on top of any of them.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Mrs. Geisler is cutting out some pictures.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The Children's Library is all dark and quiet.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Mrs. Meir is talking on the phone.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The clock says that it is 11 O'clock.

Words associated with a situation; making judgments

One of the general academic skills that teachers attempt to teach deaf children is an understanding of cause and result. Not only must the children learn the concept of cause and result, but they must be able to express it appropriately. In the following exercise, a series of causal situations is given. If the children envision the situation, the result should be fairly obvious. A number of possible choices is given to make the task somewhat easier.

The following exercise involves the understanding and use of several of the facets of sensory imagery previously discussed. The children must be able to visualize the setting and the action, project themselves into the story, and analyze their reactions to the situations. The questions following the story require answers that will show how well the children can form and react to sensory images.